

**REMARKS****Summary of the Office Action**

In the Final Office Action dated August 3, 2004, claims 1, 7/1, 9/1, 10, 16/10, and 18/10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent Publication 2002/0034336 to Shiota et al. (hereinafter "Shiota"). Claims 2, 3/1, 3/2, 4/3/1, 4/3/2, 7/2, 9/2, 11, 12/10, 12/11, 13/12/10, 13/12/11, 16/11 and 18/11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Shiota in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,078,686 to Kim (hereinafter "Kim"). Claims 5/3/1, 5/3/2, 14/12/10 and 14/12/11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Shiota in view of Kim, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,875,262 to Asada (hereinafter "Asada"). Claims 8/1 and 17/10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Shiota in view of well-known prior art. Claims 8/2 and 17/11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Shiota in view of Kim, and further in view of well-known prior art. Claims 6/1, 6/2, 15/10 and 15/11 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 19-38 are allowed.

**Summary of the Response to the Office Action**

Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner confirm the proper status of claims 33-38, as submitted in the amendment filed November 7, 2003, and entered with the Request for Continued Examination (RCE) filed January 6, 2004. Applicant amends

independent claims 1-2 and 10-11 to incorporate subject matter from claims 6 and 15, respectively, which have been indicated to be allowable by the Office Action. Applicant cancels claims 6 and 15 without prejudice or disclaimer. Accordingly, claims 1-5, 7-14, and 16-38 remain pending in this application.

### **Proper Status of Claims 33-38**

Claims 19-38 are allowed. Applicant thanks the Examiner for the allowance of claims 19-38. Applicant notes that the statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter at page 7 of the Office Action dated February 12, 2004, appears to be directed to the subject matter disclosed in claims 19-32, of which claim 19 is an independent claim. Applicant also notes that no objection was raised by the Office Action with regard to claims 33-38 as dependent upon rejected claims 1-2 and 10-11, respectively. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner confirm the proper status of claims 33-38, as submitted in the amendment filed November 7, 2003, and entered with the Request for Continued Examination (RCE) filed January 6, 2004.

### **The Objections and the Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(e) and 103(a)**

Claims 1, 7/1, 9/1, 10, 16/10, and 18/10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Shiota. Claims 2, 3/1, 3/2, 4/3/1, 4/3/2, 7/2, 9/2, 11, 12/10, 12/11, 13/12/10, 13/12/11, 16/11 and 18/11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Shiota in view of Kim. Claims 5/3/1, 5/3/2, 14/12/10, 14/12/11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Shiota in view of Kim, and further in view of Asada. Claims 8/1 and

17/10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Shiota in view of well-known prior art. Claims 8/2 and 17/11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Shiota in view of Kim, and further in view of well-known prior art. Claims 6/1, 6/2, 15/10 and 15/11 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 19-38 are allowed.

Applicant amends each of independent claims 1, 2, 10 and 11 to incorporate subject matter from claims 6 and 15, respectively. Each of independent claims 1 and 2 is amended to include the subject matter of claim 6, which has been indicated by the Office Action to be allowable. Each of independent claims 10 and 11 is amended to include the subject matter of claim 15, which has been indicated by the Office Action to be allowable.

In addition, each of independent claims 1, 2, 10 and 11 has been amended to recite “increase or decrease a density of a whole image” rather than “increase or decrease a density of a whole image by a predetermined value.” Applicant respectfully submits that this amendment prevents any confusion with the “predetermined value” recited in claims 6 and 15, based on which the gradation conversion condition is determined. Applicant respectfully submits that this amendment does not change the scope of the claimed invention because the claims 1, 2, 10 and 11 still recite the feature that a function of the density conversion condition is to increase or decrease a density of a whole image..

In view of the foregoing amendment, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1-2 and 10-11 are in condition for allowance in light of the Office

Action's indication of allowable subject matter in claims 6 and 15. Applicant further submits that claims 3-5, 7-9, 12-14, 16-18, and 33-38, are allowable at least because of their dependence upon allowable independent claims 1-2 and 10-11, respectively, and for the additional features that they recite. The cancellation of claims 6 and 15 renders moot the objections to these claims. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully request the withdrawal of the objections to claims 6/1, 6/2, 15/10 and 15/11, the rejection of claims 1, 7/1, 9/1, 10, 16/10, and 18/10 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e), the rejections of claims 2, 3/1, 3/2, 4/3/1, 4/3/2, 7/2, 9/2, 11, 12/10, 12/11, 13/12/10, 13/12/11, 16/11 and 18/11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Shiota in view of Kim, the rejection of claims 5/3/1, 5/3/2, 14/12/10 and 14/12/11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Shiota in view of Kim, and further in view of Asada, the rejection of claims 8/1 and 17/10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Shiota in view of well-known prior art, and the rejection of claims 8/2 and 17/11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Shiota in view of Kim, and further in view of well-known prior art.

**Conclusion**

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests entry of the amendments to place the application in clear condition for allowance or, in the alternative, in better form for appeal. Should the Examiner feel that there are any issues outstanding after consideration of this response, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned representative to expedite prosecution.

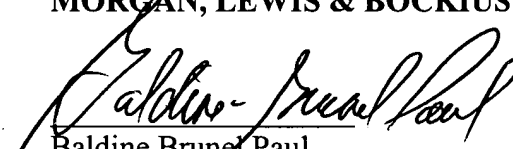
If there are any other fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-0310. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 not accounted for above, such an extension is requested and the fee should also be charged to our Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

**MORGAN, LEWIS & BOCKIUS LLP**

Dated: December 3, 2004

By:

  
Baldine Brunel Paul  
Reg. No. 54,369

**MORGAN, LEWIS & BOCKIUS LLP**

1111 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20004

Phone: (202) 739-3000

Fax : (202) 739-3001